

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Most Gracious

# **The essay of Ahmad bin Hanbal on prayer**

Translated by

**Dr Hafiz M. S. Usmani**



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## Introduction

### Imaam AHMAD Ibn Hanbal

He is Aboo 'Abdullah, Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Hanbal Ash-Shaibaanee, known by the name Ibn Hanbal. He was a great theologian, jurist and a *Hadeeth* scholar. He is also one of the four *Fiqh Imaams* and the founder of what later came to be known as *Madhhab Al-Hanbaliya* (The Hanbali juristic school).

Imaam Ahmad was born at Baghdad in Rabee' ul-Awwal, 164 H. He studied *Hadeeth* and *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) together with other Islaamic disciplines in Baghdad; then traveled to Ash-Shaam, Hijaaz and other well-known cities of knowledge for further studies. When he returned home, he studied *Fiqh* under Imaam Shaafi'ee.

He was persecuted during the reign of Al-Ma'moon bin Haaroon Ar-Rasheed for refusing to acknowledge the *Bid'ah* (innovation) of claiming 'the creation of the Qur'aan', introduced by the *Mu'tazilah*. He, however, stood firmly against all the trials and saved the *Sunnah* from the innovation of the wretched *Mu'tazilah* thoughts. He was the mostly persecuted and most firm one amongst all the *Imaams*. He is most famous for collecting the *Ahaadeeth* of the Prophet ﷺ compiled in the *Musnad Ahmad bin Hanbal*, which contains 28 to 29 thousand *Ahaadeeth*. It was said that Ibn Hanbal had memorized one million *Ahaadeeth*.

Ibn Hanbal died in Baghdad on Friday, 12 Rabee'ul-Awwal 241 H. May Allaah the Almighty have mercy upon him!



### Imaam AHMAD stated:

"O people! I have been offering prayer amongst you and I have noticed that some of the praying persons in your Masjid precede the *Imaam* (the leader of the prayer) in *Rukoo*' (bowing), *Sujood* (prostration), rising up and going into *Sujood*. There is no prayer for those people who precede the *Imaam* (their prayer is invalid). It is proven by the Prophet's *hadeeth* and by the narrations of His Sahaabah, as he صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"Does not one of you fear that if he raises his head before the *Imaam*, Allaah may change his head into that of a donkey?" (Bukhaaree & Muslim)

Another time he صلى الله عليه وسلم said: "into the form (of the head) of a dog." (Ibn Hibbaan) Because he performed prayer badly, his prayer is invalid. He might hope for reward and not fear of atonement, which is that Allaah will make his head like the head of a donkey or a dog.

He صلى الله عليه وسلم also said which is narrated by Imaam Muslim:

"The *Imaam* should go in *Rukoo*' before you, he should prostrate before you and rise up before you."

It has been narrated by Al-Baraa' bin 'Aazib:

"We used to pray behind the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and when he said, "*Sami' Allaahu liman hamida*", none of us would bend his back (to go for prostration) till the Prophet had placed his forehead on the ground." (Bukhaaree & Muslim)

It is recounted from His صلى الله عليه وسلم Companions that they said: "The Messenger of Allaah used to rise up straight while we were still prostrating."

Ibn Mas'ood رضي الله عنه narrates that he watched a person who preceded the *Imaam* and said to him: "You have neither prayed alone nor followed the *Imaam*. Whoever does not offer prayer alone nor with the Imam has not offered prayer at all."

It is reported from Ibn 'Umar *ra* that he looked towards a praying person while he was following an *Imaam* and he said to that man: "You have neither prayed alone nor with the *Imaam*", then struck him and asked him to pray again. Of course, if his prayer were acceptable, in the opinion of Ibn 'Umar, he would never have asked him to pray again.

Hittaan bin 'Abdullah Ar-Raqaashi stated: "Once, Aboo Moosaa al-Ash'aree led us in prayer, and when he was sitting in prayer a man from amongst the people said: "Has offering prayer been linked to piety and good deeds and *zakaah*?" When Aboo Moosaa completed the prayer, he left the mosque saying: "Which of you said these words?" The people kept silent. He then asked them again and they were still silent. He said: "Perhaps it was you, O Hittaan?" Hittaan answered: "By Allaah, it was not me who said these words, but I feared that you would blame me for it." Then a man from them said: "I said it, but I intended only good by it." Aboo Moosaa al-Ash'aree said: "Do you not know what to say in your prayer? Indeed the Messenger of Allaah addressed us and explained to us our *Sunnah* and what we should say in it." He صلى الله عليه وسلم stated:

"When you pray, you should make your rows, then one of you must lead the others for prayer, and when he proclaims the *takbeer* (ie the saying: *Allaahu Akbar*) then say *takbeer*, and when he recites, be quiet, and when he says:

صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ

"Not those who earned your wrath nor those who has gone astray."  
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then say: *Aameen*! And Allaah will reply. Then when the *Imaam* says *takbeer* for bowing, say *takbeer* and bow following him, for indeed, the *Imaam* should go into *rukoo*' before you and rise up before you."



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The Prophet ﷺ said:

“This is followed by that (every act of the *Imaam* must be followed by the action of the followers). When the *Imaam* raises his head from *rukoo*’ and says: “*Sami’ Allaahu liman hamida*” (Allaah hears the one who praises him), then lift your heads and say: “*Allaahumma Rabbanaa wa lakal hamd*” (O our Lord! Praise is due to you), for Allaah listens to you. Then, when the *Imaam* says the *takbeer* and prostrates, then say *takbeer* and prostrate. And when he lifts his head from *sujood* and says *takbeer*, lift your heads and say *takbeer*.” He ﷺ said:

“This is followed by that. And when he sits, the first thing every one of you should say is: ‘*at-tahiyyaatu lillaahi was-salawaatu wat-tayyibaatu...* [to the end of the tashahhud].”

(Salutations are to Allaah, and the prayers, and the good deeds; peace, Allaah’s mercy and His blessing be upon the Prophet; peace be upon us and upon Allaah’s sincere slaves. I bear witness that there is no god except Allaah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger.) (Nisaa’ee)

He ﷺ said: “When he says *takbeer*, then you say *takbeer*.”

The meaning is: The follower must wait until the *Imaam* completes his *takbeer* and his voice is being heard no more; then say *takbeer*. Many people mistook and misunderstood the meaning of this *hadeeth*, and are unaware of its true explanation. They do not pray properly and are very careless about the prayer. When the *Imaam* says *takbeer*, they also say it before completing the *Imaam*’s *takbeer*, and this is a mistake, because they should not say *takbeer* until the *Imaam* has finished his *takbeer*.

This is the reason the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: “When he (the *Imaam*) says *takbeer*, then you say *takbeer*.” And the *Imaam* cannot be considered to have said *takbeer* until he finishes it. For if he were to say: *Allaahu...*, and then become silent, it could not be considered that he had said *Allaahu Akbar*, until he had finished his words of *Allaahu Akbar* after which the people would follow the *Imaam* and say *takbeer* too. Saying *takbeer* with the *Imaam* is wrong and ignoring the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ. For instance, if one were to say: “When so

and so offers prayer, speak to him” it would mean: Wait until he finishes his prayer, then speak to him; not speak to him while he is offering prayer. Similarly, Allaah’s Messenger ﷺ said: “When he (the *Imaam*) says *takbeer*, then you say *takbeer*.”

If the *Imaam* does not have knowledge of *fiqh*, due to ignorance of it, he might make lengthy the *takbeer*, causing those who follow him to make short their saying of *Allaahu Akbar*, thus saying it before the *Imaam* finishes his *takbeer*. The follower who says: ‘*Allaahu Akbar*’ before the *Imaam* completes his *takbeer* invalidates his prayer.

The statement of the Prophet ﷺ:

“When the *Imaam* says *takbeer* and bows, then you must say *takbeer* and bow,” means that they should stay standing until the *Imaam* has completed his *takbeer* - and his voice is being heard no more - before the followers bow.

The saying of the Prophet ﷺ: “When he (the *Imaam*) raises his head and proclaims: *Sami’ Allaahu li man hamidah*, then raise your head and say *Allaahumma Rabbanaa wa lakal hamd*,” means that the followers should wait, keeping themselves in *rukoo*’ until the *Imaam* has lifted his head and completed his saying of *Sami’ Allaahu li man hamidah*”.

His ﷺ words: “When the *Imaam* says *takbeer* and goes in *sujood*,” means that the followers of the prayer should remain standing until he proclaims the *takbeer* and goes in *sujood* while placing his head on the floor; then they (the followers) should follow him. This is documented in a narration reported from Baraa’ bin ‘Aazib, and all aforementioned manners are confirmed by the sayings of the Prophet ﷺ: “The *Imaam* should bow before you and rise up before you.”

The statement of the Messenger ﷺ: “When he (the *Imaam*) raises his head and says *takbeer*, then lift your heads and say “*takbeer*”, means: They should keep prostrating until the *Imaam* has lifted his head and completed his saying of *Allaahu Akbar*, and his voice is not being heard any more; then the followers should follow him and lift their heads.



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The statement of the Prophet ﷺ: "This is followed by that" cites every rising and going down, and this is the perfect prayer. **Think about this!!** Look at it and make your prayer proper and know that most of the people's prayers are invalid, for they precede the *Imaam* in *rukoo'*, *sujood*, rising up and going down.

It was recounted in a *hadeeth*:

"The time will come when the people will offer prayer, but they will not offer it (their prayers will be unaccepted)."

I fear that that time is ours. If you were to pray in one hundred mosques, you would not observe even a single one where the prayer is offered according to the *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ and his Sahaabah. So fear Allaah and observe your prayer and that of the one offering prayer beside you. You should be aware that if a person offers prayer correctly and completely and notices another who prays improperly, losing it, preceding the *Imaam* in it, and he keeps quiet and does not tell him, nor prevent him from doing so, nor teach him the proper way of praying, then he is also branded a failure in not doing so, and participates in his mistake and in his wrongdoing. So we can say that the one who prays perfectly is a partner of the person who offers prayer improperly and badly, if he does not forbid him by teaching him. Bilaal bin Sa'd stated: "The sin which is hidden harms no one except the one who commits it, but if it is manifest and no one changes it, then it is a sin which will destroy the whole nation." (Ibn Hazam)

This is due to carelessness from their duties and negligence from their responsibilities, which should be to change and show disapproval for the one who sins in public.

It is reported that the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: "Woe to the scholar from the ignorant man when he does not teach him." (Aboo Ya'laa)

This proves that the scholar teaching an ignorant man is obligatory, rather than voluntary, for if it were not, then the Prophet ﷺ would not have condemned him with the words: "Woe to the scholar...!" due to his silence and failure to advise him.

Therefore, fear Allaah in all your circumstances, particularly your prayer. And fear Allaah of your advising the ignorant, for it is an obligatory and an essential

requirement and whoever fails to do so is a wrongdoer. So teach the people in your mosque how to pray perfectly, and neither to say *takbeer* before the *Imaam's* saying, nor to bow before him, nor to rise up or bend before him. You must know that this is the perfect, complete and proper prayer, and it is an essential requisite. This is reported from the Prophet ﷺ and his Sahaabah.

It is the strangest thing to observe a man in his house who, upon hearing the *Adhaan* (call to prayer), gets up because of fear of his Lord, and make himself ready, then leaves his home for the prayer, only to offer the prayer (and for no other motive) - he might be leaving his house on a dark, rainy night, squelching through mud and walking through water and wetting his clothes. If it is the summer season, he risks scorpions or other venomous animals (snakes and other insects) in the dark. Additionally, he might be sick or weak, but despite of all these risks he does not abandon the mosque. And he tolerates all these things due to his yearning for prayer and his pure love for it. Only prayer persuades him to leave his house in such circumstances.

**But** when the *Imaam* starts the prayer, Shaytaan deceives him, and he precedes the *Imaam* in *rukoo'*, *sujood*, in rising up and going down. This is the illusion of Shaytaan, who wants to nullify his prayer. Then he comes out the mosque and there is no reward of the prayer for him.

Another amazing thing is that all the followers of the leading *Imaam* agree, that no one is permitted to finish the prayer until the *Imaam* finishes it - all of them wait until the *Imaam* completes the words *As-salaamu 'alaykum wa rahmatullaah*. Despite this, however, all of the followers (except as Allaah wishes) precede the *Imaam* in *rukoo'*, *sujood*, rising up and going down, due to the deception of Shaytaan, which is the motive of the prayer being incomplete and careless. This is their share in Islaam, and it was reported in the following *hadeeth*:

"There is no share in Islaam for a person who gives up prayer." (At-Tabaraani said: "This is in fact the statement of 'Umar bin al-Khattaab.")

So, every one who offers prayer incorrectly or carelessly is imperfect and negligent in his Islaam; and his share in Islaam is according to his lot in prayer; and his love for Islaam is equivalent to his liking of the prayer.

So, know yourself, O servants of Allaah, and know that your share in Islaam and the measure of your Islaam are according to your lot in prayer and the measure of



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So, know yourself, O servants of Allaah, and know that your share in *Islaam* and the measure of your *Islaam* are according to your lot in prayer and the measure of



it. Therefore, take care that you do not meet Allaah whilst your Islaam is meaningless, for the measure of one's Islaam is found in the heart.

The Prophet ﷺ stated:

“Prayer is a pillar of Islaam.” (Ahmad, Bayhaquee)

Do you not know that the poles support a tent? If the pole falls, the tent falls too - the ropes and pegs of the tent will not support it. If the pole is fixed in its place then the pegs and the ropes will also help. Similarly, the prayer has this position in Islaam.

So look - May Allaah be merciful with you - think and complete your prayer and fear Allaah in it. Help one another concerning prayer and teach one another how to perform it perfectly and remind one another of the mistakes occurring during prayer, and forgetfulness during it, for Allaah has ordered you to help one another in righteousness and in piety; and prayer is the best deed of righteousness.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

“The first thing that will be lost from your religion is reliance and the last thing to be lost will be prayer. You will observe people from you praying, but they will get no reward for it.” (Bayhaquee)

He ﷺ also said:

“The first thing which the slave will be inquired concerning, on the last Day, is prayer. If this is validated, the rest of his all deeds will be accepted too. If the prayer is invalid, then the rest of his deeds will also be invalid.” (Aboo Daawood, Ibn Maajah and others)

So, prayer is the last thing that will be lost from the religion, and the first deed that will be inquired about on the Last Day. If the prayer is the last thing to be lost in the religion, then when the prayer is lost, all will be lost. Let the one who is careless in his prayer, who offers it incorrectly and anticipates the *Imaam*, be aware, that there is no prayer for him; and if his prayer is destroyed, then so is his Islaam.

So, respect your prayer - May Allaah be merciful with you - and offer it perfectly and correctly. Fear Allaah particularly in prayer, and in all your circumstances. You

should be aware that Allaah has honoured the virtue and importance of the prayer in the Holy Quraan. He سبحانه و تعالى respected and graded its people. He سبحانه و تعالى has singled out the prayer with special mentioning in the Holy Qur'aan, from the various kinds of worship, referring to it in innumerable places. He has specially encouraged us to offer it, by describing for us the pious deeds whose reward is the Garden of the Paradise - the first of which mentioned being prayer and the last of which also being prayer. Allaah the Almighty said:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾

The Believers must (eventually) win through - those who humble themselves in their prayers. (Qur'aan 23:1-2)

Admiring the believers, Allaah the Almighty begins with their prayer, praising them by it. Then He swt mentions their pure deeds; their charitable deeds, which are pleasing to Him. So, He سبحانه و تعالى admired them with these words:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ لِأَمْتِنَتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُونَ ﴿٨﴾ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْوَارِثُونَ ﴿١٠﴾ الَّذِينَ يَرِثُونَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ ﴿١١﴾

And those who faithfully observe their trust and their covenants. And who (strictly) guard their prayers. Those will be the heirs, who will inherit Paradise; they will dwell therein (forever). (Qur'aan 23: 8-11)

Allaah has promised these people - who do such noble and charitable acts, which are pleasing to him - the eternal life of Paradise, referring to prayer twice. Then Allaah censures all mankind, disparaging them and charging them with wickedness, impatience and fretfulness and miserliness except those who performed prayer; they have been excepted by Allaah. He سبحانه و تعالى says:

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوعًا ﴿١٦﴾ إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوعًا ﴿١٧﴾ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوعًا ﴿١٨﴾ إِلَّا الْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿١٩﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُونَ ﴿٢٠﴾ وَالَّذِينَ فِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُومٌ ﴿٢١﴾ لِلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ ﴿٢٢﴾

Truly man was created very impatient - fretful when evil touches him, and niggardly when good reaches him. Not so those devoted to Prayer: those



it. Therefore, take care that you do not meet Allaah whilst your Islaam is meaningless, for the measure of one's Islaam is found in the heart.

The Prophet ﷺ stated:

“Prayer is a pillar of Islaam.” (Ahmad, Bayhaquee)

Do you not know that the poles support a tent? If the pole falls, the tent falls too - the ropes and pegs of the tent will not support it. If the pole is fixed in its place then the pegs and the ropes will also help. Similarly, the prayer has this position in Islaam.

So look - May Allaah be merciful with you - think and complete your prayer and fear Allaah in it. Help one another concerning prayer and teach one another how to perform it perfectly and remind one another of the mistakes occurring during prayer, and forgetfulness during it, for Allaah has ordered you to help one another in righteousness and in piety; and prayer is the best deed of righteousness.

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Truly man was created very impatient - fretful when evil touches him, and niggardly when good reaches him. Not so those devoted to Prayer: those



who remain steadfast to their prayer, and those in whose wealth is a recognised right for the (needy) who asks and him who is prevented (from asking, for some reason) (Qur'aan 70:19-25)

Then Allaah described them by their pure, good actions, which are pleasing to Him, up to these words:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ بِشَهَادَتِهِمْ قَائِمُونَ ﴿٣٣﴾

And those who stand by their testimony (Qur'aan 70:33)

Allaah ﷻ closes the description and praise of these noble people with mention of their guarding the holiness of their prayer. And He ﷻ said:

وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَلَى صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُونَ ﴿٣٤﴾ أُولَٰئِكَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ مُّكْرَّمُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾

And those who are attentive at their worship; these will dwell in Gardens, honoured. (Qur'aan 70:34-35)

Allaah has made a covenant of a place in Paradise, with those people who perform such good deeds, stating his description of them by referring to prayer and then ending it by referring to the same. Allaah the Almighty asks his beloved Prophet saw for obedience in all matters, particularly mentioning the prayer from the many kinds of obedience, for certainly the prayer is a kind of obedience as Allaah says:

أَتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ

Recite what is sent of the Book by inspiration to you and establish Regular Prayer. (29:45)

Recitation of the Book contains all kind of obedience and keeping away from all disobedience, and Allaah has specified the prayer for special mention; He ﷻ said:

إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ

Verily, the prayer prevents from the shameful and unjust deeds (Qur'aan 29:45)

See! How Allaah has made obligatory upon the Prophet ﷺ hold fasting to the prayer:

وَأْمُرْ أَهْلَكَ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَاصْطَبِرْ عَلَيْهَا لَا نَسْأَلُكَ رِزْقًا نَحْنُ نَرْزُقُكَ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ

Enjoin prayer on your people and be constant therein. We ask you not to provide sustenance: We provide it for you. But the (fruit of the) Hereafter is for righteousness. (Qur'aan 20:132)

Allaah ordered the Prophet ﷺ to order his kith and kin to pray and to be steadfast in it. He ﷻ commanded all believers to turn to Him with patience and tolerance; and He ﷻ joins the prayer with patience, as He said:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ ﴿١٥٣﴾

O you who believe! Seek help with patient perseverance and prayer: for Allaah is with those who patiently persevere. (Qur'aan 2:153)

Similarly, He ﷻ ordered the Children of Israel to seek his assistance with patience and prayer ahead of all other forms of obedience, as He swt said:

وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ ﴿١٥٠﴾

And seek help with patient perseverance and prayer: it is indeed hard except to those who are humble. (Qur'aan 2:45)

Allaah swt gave an instance of steadfastness and forbearance in the wisdom and guidance which He ﷻ endowed to his beloved Friend Ibraaheem, and also upon Loot, Ishaaq and Ya'qoob as. He ﷻ stated in the Holy Qur'aan:

قُلْنَا يَنَارُ كُونِي بَرْدًا وَسَلَامًا عَلَىٰ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴿٦١﴾

We said: "O fire! Be thou cool and (a means of) safety for Ibraaheem!" (Qur'aan 21:69)

up to these words:

وَنَجَّيْنَاهُ وَلُوطًا

And we saved him and Loot. (Qur'aan 21:71)

وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ إِسْحَاقَ وَيَعْقُوبَ نَافِلَةً

And we granted him Ishaaq and, as an additional bounty, Ya'qoob. (Qur'aan 21:72)



وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ وَإِقَامَ الصَّلَاةِ

And We sent them inspiration to do good deeds to establish regular prayers. (Qur'aan 21:73)

Allaah mentions all kinds of good deeds and singles out prayer for special mention; and he made it obligatory upon us to prayer regularly. This is like His Words regarding Ismaa'eel as:

وَكَانَ يَأْمُرُ أَهْلَهُ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ وَكَانَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ مَرْضِيًّا

He used to enjoin Prayer and Charity on his people, and he was most acceptable in the sight of his Lord. (Qur'aan 19:55)

Regarding the Prophet Moosaa as, He سبحانه و تعالى also mentioned prayer first of all. With this you can realize how important the prayer is, as He سبحانه و تعالى stated:

وَهَلْ أَتَاكَ حَدِيثُ مُوسَى

Has the story of Moses reached thee? (Qur'aan 20:9)

إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي

Verily I am Allaah; there is no god but I, so serve me (only) and establish regular prayer for celebrating My praise. (Qur'aan 20:14)

The best manners of obedience to Allaah and refraining from disobeying is found in Allaah's Words to Moosaa as (so serve me) because Allaah has particularly mentioned prayer amongst all other kinds of worship and ordered especially for it. He سبحانه و تعالى says:

وَالَّذِينَ يُؤْتُونَ زَكَاةً وَيَسْتَكُونَ بِالْكِتَابِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّا لَا نَضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُصْلِحِينَ

As to those who hold fast by the Book and establish regular prayer - never shall We suffer the reward of the righteous to perish. (Qur'aan 7:170)

To be steadfast to the Book provides complete obedience and avoidance of any type of disobedience. Anyway, Allaah has particularly mentioned prayer in his words (and establish prayer regularly), and for those who waste the prayer, Allaah has commanded that they be punished because of their disobedience, as He سبحانه و تعالى said:

خَلَفَ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهَوَاتِ فَسُوفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غِيًّا

But after them there followed a posterity who missed prayers and followed after lusts: soon then will they face destruction. (Qur'aan 19:59)

Obeying the desire or vain wishes causes committing all kinds of disobedience; therefore Allaah سبحانه و تعالى has branded them with all manners of disobedience because of their ignorance in their prayer. All of the above mentioned is what Allaah has told us about the greatness of prayer, putting it before all good deeds and specifying it countless times for special mention and making it obligatory upon us. Its significance cannot be overemphasised. Allaah has made prayer obligatory, commanding his Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم to offer it from the beginning of his Prophethood, before all other deeds - and the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم made it obligatory upon his nation, and his last words while he صلى الله عليه وسلم was dying were also about the prayer:

"Remember Allaah in your prayer, and fear Him regarding that which is in your right hand (slaves). (Nisaa'ee and Ahmad)

The Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم another time said:

"The last advice which was given by the Prophets to their nations was concerning prayer, and it is also the last duty which they placed upon them before dying."

He صلى الله عليه وسلم also said whilst dying:

"Prayer, prayer, prayer." (Ibn Jareer, Tabaree)

So the prayer was the first act of worship enjoined upon the Muslims and the last thing that was advised by the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم to his nation. It is also the last thing to depart from Islaam, and it is the first deed about which the servant will be questioned on the Last Day. Prayer is a pillar of Islaam; once it is lost, there is no Islaam. So fear Allaah in all your matters generally, and in your prayer especially. Be steadfast in it, and be careful not to lose it nor to be careless whilst offering it or to precede the *Imaam* in it. And beware of Shaytaan's deceit and his effort in making you the losers of its reward, because it is the last thing in Islaam; and whosoever loses the last thing of his religion has lost everything of it, so be



steadfast in the last thing of your religion. And direct the *Imaam*, O slaves of Allaah, to be careful in his prayer, to take care in it whenever he bows or prostrates, for I offered prayer one day with you and I was unable to say "*Subhaana rabbee al-adheem*" three times in bowing and prostrating, and this was on account of the haste of the *Imaam*. He neither permitted himself, nor the followers to take their time; instead he rushed in his prayer. So tell him that the *Imaam* - if he offers prayer correctly - will receive the reward of his own prayer and the equivalent to the reward of his followers. But if he offers prayer incorrectly, he will bear the sin of his followers as well. *Imaam* Hasan al-Basree stated: "The least *tasbeeh* (*Subhaana rabbee al-Adheem* or *Subhaana rabbee al-A'laa*) is three times, the midst *tasbeeh* is five times and the perfect *tasbeeh* is seven times. So the least number of *tasbeeh* that the *Imaam* should repeat in *rukoo'* is three times, and the least number of *tasbeeh* in *sujood* should also be three times. He should not rush through it quickly. He should say it properly, carefully and apparently, because if he says it quickly, his followers have no time to say it, and in the same way they will also say it quickly, and may anticipate him and due to it their prayer will be destroyed and he will bear the sin equivalent to all their sins. However, if he does not say it quickly, and finishes his prayer and his *tasbeeh* perfectly, then his followers will say likewise and he will have offered that which is obligatory for him and there will be no sin upon him.

And ask him, when he lifts his head from *rukoo'* and says: *Sami' Allaahu li man hamida*, to keep standing until he has pronounced: *Rabbanaa lakal hamad* without rush in his saying; should he want to say more than that, he can say:

*Rabbanaa wa lakal hamd, mil' assamaawaati wa mil' alardh wa mil'a ma shi'ta min shay'in baa'du laa maani'a limaa aatayta wa laa mutiya limaa manaata, wa laa yanfa'oo zal jaddi minkal jadd"*

(O Lord! Praise is due to you. Filling the heavens and the earth, and filling whatever else you wish. No one can stop what you grant, and no one can give what you withhold, nor can the possession of an owner benefit him in front of you). (Muslim and Nasaa'ee)

This is almost never observed in these days among the people. Anas *ra* narrated:

"Allaah's Messenger *saw* remained standing after lifting his head from *rukoo'* for so long that it was said: he has forgotten." (Bukhaaree and Muslim)

This is never seen in these days among the people, although it is obligatory upon the *Imaam* not to rush after lifting his head from *rukoo'*, nor should he say *Rabbanaa wa lakal hamd* too hastily; he should say it slowly and carefully without haste, so that the followers may pronounce it in time. Then when he makes *sujood* and raises his head from *sujood*, he should sit straight for a while and should say *Rabbigh firlee* without any rush, so that the people also can do likewise before he goes in *sujood* again. He should not move quickly, making *sujood* a second time immediately after lifting his head, causing the people to precede the *Imaam* and resulting in the loss of their prayer. If this happens against the way of the Prophet ﷺ then the *Imaam* will bear the sin equivalent to the followers and their punishment. It is reported that he ﷺ said:

"Every worshipper is a guardian and is responsible for that which he guards." (At-Tabaree)

It has also been narrated that the *Imaam* is a guardian for those who follow him in prayer. And it is the most important thing for the *Imaam* to advise his followers in prayer and prevent them from preceding him in *rukoo'* and *sujood* or from doing likewise along with him. Instead he should order them to ensure that their *rukoo'*, *sujood*, rising up and going down be after him, and he should correct their manner and teach them properly; then he can be a guardian over them, because on the Last Day he will be answerable about them.

It is of main importance for the *Imaam* to pray well and perfectly, to concentrate upon it, for his reward will be a good one, like that of those who follow him, if he prays correctly. But he will bear their sin if they offer prayer incorrectly. It is a right and duty of the Muslims to send forth the best, the most pious, the most knowledgeable in religious affairs that they can see him. It is mentioned in a hadeeth:

"When a man leads his people in prayer while better men offer prayer behind him, they are in a state of ignorance." (At-Tabaraani)

It is also narrated:

"Give the matters of your religion in the hands of your *fuqahaa'* (jurists), your *Imaams* and your *qurraa'* (scholars of the Qur'aanic knowledge)." (Daaraqutnee)



The meaning is: The reciters, the noble men of those who know their Lord and fear him, who take pains in their prayer and those of the followers of the Imaam, and who are fearful of committing sins of their own or of their followers in prayer, if they offer prayer incorrectly. And the *qurraa'* are those who have memorised the Qur'aan and act upon it, not those who just memorised it. It is narrated:

"Indeed, the most perfect people by this Quraan are those who put it in their daily life."

He who leads the people in prayer should be most knowledgeable amongst them concerning Allaah, and the most fearful. This is an obligation upon them. If they do like this, their prayer is purification for them, but if they ignore this obligation, they remain in a state of ignorance, rebuttal and imperfection in their Islaam, far from Allaah and from his happiness, and from his Paradise. Allaah showers his mercy upon those who take care in their offering of the prayer and in their religion, so they should put forth the best of them, following by this means, the *sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ, seeking in this way the closeness of Allaah.

So ask your Imaam, O servant of Allaah, not to say *takbeer* as soon as he stands for prayer, until he has looked at his right and left. He should notice that the line of the followers is straight and that their shoulders are in line; he must ask them to straighten their lines, and to stand up shoulder to shoulder; and he must observe that there is no gap between their rows - he must ask them to close their ranks until they stand shoulder to shoulder. You should be aware that crookedness in the lines and not ensuring that the shoulders of the followers are in line means that the prayer is not perfect and complete. And in the same manner, a gap between each of the followers means that the prayer is not perfect and complete. So be careful about this, as it is reported from the Prophet ﷺ.

"Stand close together in your rows, bring them near one another, and stand neck to neck, for by Him in Whose hand my soul is, I see the Devil coming in through the openings in the row just like a small black sheep." (Ahmad, Bukhaaree, Aboo Daawood, Nasaa'ee, Ibn Khuzaimah)

It is also reported that whenever he ﷺ led the prayer, he would never say *takbeer* until he had looked to the right and the left and had ordered them to straighten up their shoulders, saying:

"Do not be irregular, for then your hearts will be irregular." (Aboo Daawood)

Upon seeing a man whose chest was not in line, he ﷺ said:

"It is obligatory upon you to offer prayer shoulder-to-shoulder, for if you do not do so, indeed Allaah will put disagreement in your hearts." (Bukhaaree, Muslim and Aboo Daawood)

So straightening the lines and closing the ranks is a compulsory part of the prayer, while neglecting it is deficiency in prayer. It is reported from 'Umar *ra* that he would lead the prayer and he would not pronounce the *takbeer* until a man came to him whom he appointed to assure that the rows were in order, and he would tell 'Umar: "They have straightened their lines"; then he would say "*Allaahu Akbar*." (Tabaree in his *Taareekh*)

It is also recounted from 'Umar bin 'Abdul 'Azeez similar to this. And it is narrated that Bilaal would straighten the lines and that he used to rap their shins with a stick until they stood in rows. Some of the scholars say that this must have happened during the prayer led by the Prophet ﷺ at the time of the *iqamah*, prior to starting the prayer, because a narration informs us:

"He (Bilaal) never proclaimed *adhaan* after the Prophet's ﷺ death except once when he came back from Syria." (Taareekh of Tabaree)

When Bilaal returned from Syria, in the reign Aboo Bakr *ra*, he and other Companions of the Prophet ﷺ asked him to pronounce the *adhaan* and he accepted their request. And when they heard the voice of Bilaal calling them for prayer in Madeenah - for they had not heard him calling for prayer since after the death of the Prophet ﷺ - their hearts were filled with a sense of renewal for the religion of the Prophet ﷺ, and his *adhaan* for prayer filled them with desire for it, so that some of them said: "The Prophet ﷺ has returned to us in a vision." And when Bilaal aroused among them - by his call - a sense of wishing for the Prophet ﷺ, they became upset and started to cry for him, so that the freed slave-women came out from their houses, longing for the Prophet ﷺ on hearing Bilaal's *adhaan*. And when Bilaal pronounced *Ash hadu anna Muhammadar Rasoolullaah* (I testify that Muhammad ﷺ is the Messenger of Allaah), he became unable to continue. Some of the people said "It



The meaning is: The reciters, the noble men of those who know their Lord and fear him, who take pains in their prayer and those of the followers of the *Imaam*, and who are fearful of committing sins of their own or of their followers in prayer, if they offer prayer incorrectly. And the *qurraa'* are those who have memorised the Qur'aan and act upon it, not those who just memorised it. It is narrated:

"Indeed, the most perfect people by this Quraan are those who put it in their daily life."

He who leads the people in prayer should be most knowledgeable amongst them concerning Allaah, and the most fearful. This is an obligation upon them. If they do like this, their prayer is purification for them, but if they ignore this obligation, they remain in a state of ignorance, rebuttal and imperfection in their Islaam, far from Allaah and from his happiness, and from his Paradise. Allaah showers his mercy upon those who take care in their offering of the prayer and in their religion, so they should put forth the best of them, following by this means, the *sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ, seeking in this way the closeness of Allaah.

So ask your Imaam, O servant of Allaah, not to say *takbeer* as soon as he stands for prayer, until he has looked at his right and left. He should notice that the line of the followers is straight and that their shoulders are in line; he must ask them to straighten their lines, and to stand up shoulder to shoulder; and he must observe that there is no gap between their rows - he must ask them to close their ranks until they stand shoulder to shoulder. You should be aware that crookedness in the lines and not ensuring that the shoulders of the followers are in line means that the prayer is not perfect and complete. And in the same manner, a gap between each of the followers means that the prayer is not perfect and complete. So be careful about this, as it is reported from the Prophet ﷺ.

"Stand close together in your rows, bring them near one another, and stand neck to neck, for by Him in Whose hand my soul is, I see the Devil coming in through the openings in the row just like a small black sheep." (Ahmad, Bukhaaree, Aboo Daawood, Nasaa'ee, Ibn Khuzaimah)

It is also reported that whenever he ﷺ led the prayer, he ﷺ would never say *takbeer* until he had looked to the right and the left and had ordered them to straighten up their shoulders, saying:

"Do not be irregular, for then your hearts will be irregular." (Aboo Daawood)

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is due to his mind becoming blurred out of love for the Prophet ﷺ and his missing him too much." May Allaah shower His mercy upon Bilaal and all of the Muhaajiroon and the Ansaar, and may He ﷻ associate us with those who follow them with true, pure and the best of the belief. So fear Allaah - O Society of Believers - and perfect your prayer, and act upon the *Sunnah* of the Prophet ﷺ and his Sahaabah in it. This is a required responsibility upon you.

Allaah ﷻ has promised those who follow them His happiness, and an everlasting residence in Paradise. He ﷻ said:

وَالسَّيِّقُونَ الْأَوَّلُونَ مِنَ الْمُهَاجِرِينَ وَالْأَنْصَارِ وَالَّذِينَ  
اتَّبَعُوهُمْ بِإِحْسَانٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُمْ وَرَضُوا عَنْهُ وَأَعَدَّ  
لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ خَالِدِينَ فِيهَا أَبَدًا  
ذَٰلِكَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٠٠﴾

The vanguard (of Islaam) - the first of those who forsook (their homes) and of those who gave them aid and (also) those who follow them in (all) good deeds - well pleased is Allaah with them as are they with Him. For them He has prepared gardens underneath which rivers flow to dwell therein for ever: That is the supreme felicity. (Qur'aan 9:100)

To follow the Muhaajiroon and Ansaar is obligatory upon the Muslims until the Last Day. It has been narrated regarding the Prophet ﷺ:

"He used to make two silent pause during the prayer - first after the opening invocation, and secondly after completing his recitation." (Aboo Daawood and Tirmidhee)

He would pause before Ruku in order to make normal his breath after recitation, but most *Imaams* do the opposite. So ask your *Imaam*, O Servant of Allaah, to keep silent until his breath becomes normal, before bowing; and he should refrain from joining his recitation to the *takbeer* of bowing without a pause in between. Generally, a lot of the people ignore to do so, except those whom Allaah wills. And they do it without awareness of their mistake. And some of the younger, more vigorous members of the congregation prayer mostly go down from a standing state into prostration and put their hands on the floor before their knees, and when they

stand up from prostration or the *tashahhud*, they lift their knees from the floor before their hands, which is not correct.\* It opposes the opinion of the jurists; it is obligatory upon them to place their knees on the floor; then their hands, when they go down for prostrating, and when they are standing up, they should raise their hands before the knees - this is what has come to us from the Prophet ﷺ.

So ask your *Imaam* to do so and prevent whomsoever you notice doing opposite to it and ask him, when he rises, to rise on the tips of his toes and not to put one foot in front of the other, for that is disliked. It is reported from 'Abdullaah bin 'Abbaas and others that putting one foot in front of the other when one stands nullifies the prayer.

It is asked of the follower to fix his sight on the place where he puts his forehead while prostrating, and not to raise his sight towards the sky, nor to look to both sides. And you should know that it is disliked. It has even been stated that it spoils the prayer. Making *sujood*, he should put his fingers level to his ears, and he should have his fingers together, directing towards the Ka'bah. He should also keep his elbows and his forearms away from both of his sides, and not touch them with his body.

Imaam Muslim and Aboo Daawood narrate that:

"When he *saw* would prostrate, if a lamb had passed under his arms it could have got through." (Muslim and Aboo Daawood)

This was owing to his exaggerated manner in which he lifted his elbows and his upper arms. The Companions رضی اللہ عنہم reported:

"When the Messenger of Allaah ﷺ prostrated himself, he would keep his arms far away from his sides so much so that we took pity on him." (Muslim and Aboo Daawood)

\* Imam Ahmad's mentioned opinion about placing the knees before hands is against the *saheeh ahaadeeth* (e.g. Daraqutnee & Haakim). Many *ahaadeeth* show clearly that one must place his hands before his knees. Sheikh al-Albaani said: "All *ahaadeeth* which contradict this correct way, are unauthentic." Likewise, standing up from *sujood*, one must lift his knees from the ground before his hands. The Prophet ﷺ would depend on his hands while standing up from *sujood* or from the first *tashahhud*. (Bukhaaree and Shaafi'ee)



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"Indeed, a slave prostrates upon seven parts of his body." (Bukhaaree and Aboo Daawood)

For, if any part does not touch the ground it curses him. It is also obligatory upon him whilst bowing, to hold his knees with his hands and place his fingers whilst extending them, and lean upon his upper arms and forearms and to keep his back straight; and he must not raise his head nor lower it. It is narrated concerning the Holy Prophet ﷺ:

"When he was in *rukoo*', if a glass of water had been put on his back, it would not have moved from its place." (Ahmad)

This was because of the straightness of his back and the particular way in which he used to bow. Therefore, offer your prayer perfectly - may Allaah be merciful with you - and perfect its *rukoo*' and its *sujood* and know its limits. It is narrated:

"Indeed, when a servant prays and offers his prayer perfectly, it is raised up and decorated, and when it accesses the doors of the heavens, they are opened for it and it intercedes on his behalf, saying: "May Allaah protect you as you have protected me." But if he offers prayer imperfectly, not perfecting its bowing nor its prostration, nor is he careful about its limits, it is lifted up and it is darkened and it says: "May Allaah destroy you as you spoiled me!" And when it accesses the doors of the heavens, they are closed for it; then it is rolled up like a bundled garment and it is flung back in the face of its performer." (Tabaraani)

It is also obligatory upon a man, when he sits for the *tashahhud*, to sit on his left foot, which is spread beneath him with the right foot straight up and the toes of the right foot directing towards the Ka'bah. The left hand should be put on the left thigh and the fingers should be directed to the Ka'bah also. His right hand should be put on his right thigh and he should point with his index finger while forming his thumb and middle finger into a circle, and making a fist with the other fingers.

And if he is offering prayer towards a *Sutrah* (a barrier), he should pray near to it, as this is liked. He should not let anyone pass in front of him inside the *sutrah*, for it is disliked. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said:

"Whoever offers prayer towards a *sutrah*, let him stand close to it, otherwise Shaytaan will pass between him and it." (Bukhaaree, Aboo Daawood and Nasaa'ee)

It is ignorance that the praying persons allow someone to pass between him and his *sutrah*. He ﷺ also stated:

"Repel the one who wants to pass inside the *sutrah*, but if he persists, then strike him because he is a shaytaan." (Aboo Daawood)

And if it were permitted for anyone to pass in front of a praying person, the Prophet ﷺ would never have commanded the praying person to strike him. This tells us the seriousness of such an act of disobedience as passing in front of a person offering prayer. And it is also clear that it is an act of disobedience for the worshipper to allow him to do so. He ﷺ stated:

"If one knew [the sin] of passing in front of one who is praying, he would rather wait forty (*here the narrator cannot remember whether he said days, months or years*) than to pass in front of him." (Bukhaaree, Muslim, Aboo Daawood Tirmidhee)

It is also narrated:

Aboo Saalih as-Saman said: "I will narrate to you what I heard and saw from Aboo Sa'eed al-Khudri. One day I was with Aboo Sa'eed and he was offering prayer on Friday facing something, which concealed him from the people, when a young man from the tribe of Mu'ait came and tried to pass in front of Aboo Sa'eed. He pushed him back. He tried again and Aboo Sa'eed struck him harder. The two scuffled. The man went to Marwan to complain. Aboo Sa'eed also went to Marwan. Marwan asked: "What has happened between you and the son of your brother that caused him to complain?" Aboo Sa'eed said: "I heard the Prophet ﷺ saying:

"If any of you prays toward a *sutrah* and someone tries to pass in front of you, then turn him away. If he refuses, use force for he is a shaytaan." (Bukhaaree and Muslim)

It is preferred for a man, before he goes out for Fajr prayer, to offer two *rak'aat* in his house and then to leave for the mosque. And it is preferred for him to



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remember Allaah between the two *rak'aat* in the house, and the Fajr prayer. And he should refrain from talking except for what is necessary, like teaching the ignorant and correcting him, and asking him to perform what is necessary for the praying person, and preventing him from the sinful actions, because that is an obligation. Doing what is compulsory is greater and more rewarding than remembering Allaah, which is optional. It is narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said:

"No optional deed of worship is acceptable until the obligatory has been performed." (Bukhaaree, Muslim, Tirmidhee)

It is preferred for a person, when he adventures for the mosque, that he should go with fear and humbleness, and he should be solemn and silent. When he reaches the mosque he should pray with the congregation and if he has missed a part of the prayer, he must make it up at the end. It is narrated that the Prophet ﷺ would order his Companions to come solemnly and peacefully to the mosque. (Bukhaaree, Muslim and Aboo Daawood)

Hence, there is no objection to ones rushing a little, if he fears missing the opening *takbeer* of the prayer, so long as that rush is not exaggerated as to be disliked. For it is recounted from the Sahaabah that:

"They would hurry a little if they feared of missing the opening Takbeer."

You should know - May Allaah be merciful with you - that when the slave adventures from his house for the mosque, he is going to meet Allaah - the One, the Irresistible, the Omnipotent, the Almighty, the Most Forgiving - conscious that nothing is secret from Allaah, whatever it might be, and nothing is hidden from Allaah, and that even as small as a mustard seed is not unseen from him, nor some thing smaller, nor larger, in the seven earths or in the seven heavens, in the seven seas or the high mountains, fixed and firm. And indeed, the mosque to which he comes is one of Allaah's houses. He wishes only for (the pleasure of) Allaah and he goes out only for Allaah's house. Allaah the Almighty said:

(Lit is such a light) in houses, which Allaah has permitted to be raised to honour, for the celebration in them of His name: In them is He glorified in the mornings and in the evenings (again and again), by men whom neither

traffic nor merchandise can divert from the Remembrance of Allaah, nor from regular prayer, nor from the practice of regular Charity: Their (only) fear is for the Day when hearts and eyes will be transformed (in a world wholly new). (Qur'aan 24:36-37)

Therefore, when any one of you leaves his house for the mosque he should say quietly to himself words of remembrance of Allaah. He should adventure solemnly and peacefully, because this is what the Prophet ﷺ asked us to do; he should go wishing and longing for Allaah's happiness; and with fear and anxiety; and with humbleness and humility towards Allaah. For the more humble, the more submissive, the more obedient he is to Allaah, the more virtuous and righteous does he become in prayer, and the greater becomes his reward, and the more noble and closer to Allaah becomes the praying man. But he should not be filled with pride, for in that case Allaah will destroy him and will reject his deeds, as the deeds of the proud are never acceptable.

It is narrated, regarding Prophet Ibraaheem as, Allaah's Friend, that he spent all the night in prayer and remembering Allaah *swt*, and in the morning, he was happy with prayer from that night, and he said: "How Great is the Lord of Ibraaheem and how great is the slave, Ibraaheem!" On the next day, he did not find anyone to share his food with him - and he liked to share his food - so he went outside to the road with his food and sat, waiting for any passer-by to share with him. Then two angels came down from the heavens and came nearer to him. So he invited them to eat with him and they acceded. Then Ibraaheem suggested that they go to a nearby garden, which had fresh water spring. They agreed to this and went to the garden, only to find that the spring had run underground, so there was no water, which was a severe blow to Ibraaheem. He was embarrassed by what he had uttered, so the angels said to him: "Ask your *Rabb* to flow the spring again." He did so, but the spring did not emerge, and this was a great knockback to him and so Ibraaheem said to the angels: "You ask Allaah." So one of the angels asked Him and, behold! The water flowed again. Then the other called upon Allaah *سبحانه وتعالى* and the water flowed near to them. Then they told him that his being impressed by his own standing in prayer the previous night had caused his invocation to be rejected. So should know about pride - May Allaah be merciful with you - for the act that is done with pride is never accepted. Be meek in your prayer. Should any one of you stand in prayer before his Lord, he should know Allaah, in his heart, by the great blessings which He *سبحانه وتعالى* endows upon him and the unlimited favour which He *سبحانه وتعالى* grants him, because Allaah *سبحانه وتعالى* has evaluated him with great righteousness, but he has seated himself with sins. Therefore it is obligatory upon



him to be excessive in his humbleness and humility towards Allaah سبحانه وتعالى. It is narrated:

"Certainly, Allaah سبحانه وتعالى revealed to 'Eesaa, the son of Maryam as: 'When you stand before Me, do so in meekness and humility, humbling yourself (before Me), for it is more appropriate for it (your soul) to be humble. And when you invoke Me, let the parts of your body tremble.'" It is also narrated that Allaah swt revealed to Moosaa as something similar to this. So what is better and more correct for you, O Servant of Allaah, than that you humble yourself when you stand before Allaah?"

It is related relative to Muhammad bin Seereen, that when he stood for praying, the blood would drain from his face, so great was his fear of Allaah سبحانه وتعالى and his awe of Him; and it is narrated by Muslim bin Yassar al-Basree: *"When he offered prayer he was unaware of any sound, so engaged was he with his prayer, and he was very fearful of Allaah."*

It has also been related from 'Aamir Al-'Anbaree - who is known as 'Aamir bin 'Abdu Qais - that he said: *"That a number of daggers be struck between my shoulders is more preferable to me than to think about worldly affairs when I am offering prayer."*

And it is also related from Sa'eed Ibn Mu'aaz that he said: *"I have never performed a prayer in which I thought about the matters of this world, until I emerged from the mosque."*

And it is narrated from Aboo Dardaa' that he stated: *"That my face be covered with dust for my Rabb is better for me - because that is the greatest kind of worship from Allaah."* So none of you must fear the dust, nor find it unpleasant to prostrate in it, and there is no doubt that each of you comes from it. Nor should any one of you fear of its excess, for indeed, it is by this means that one strives to achieve freedom from slavery and salvation from the Hell - a fire in which the established, high mountains which were placed as pegs could not stand; nor the seven powerful heavens, built one above another, which are fixed as a well guarded umbrella over us; nor the earth, which was placed as a dwelling place for us; nor the seven seas, whose depths or largeness nobody knows besides the One Who created them. Then what about us, with our weak bodies, our dainty bones, our thin and weak skin? We seek refuge with Allaah سبحانه وتعالى from the Fire!

Therefore, he amongst you - May Allaah be merciful with you - should stand for prayer as if he sees Allaah سبحانه وتعالى in front of him; for though he may not see Allaah, indeed, Allaah sees him. It has been related that Allaah's Messenger صلى الله عليه وسلم advised a man, saying:

"Fear Allaah as if you see Him; for of course, though you may not see Him, He سبحانه وتعالى sees you." (similarly worded report in Bukhaaree and Muslim)

This is the advice of the Prophet to the slave in all his matters, so what about when he offers prayer, when he stands in front of Allaah, in an special place, a holy place, longing Allaah and directing his face towards Him سبحانه وتعالى. It is narrated:

"Verily, the servant, when he starts his prayer, should turn his face towards Allaah, and he should not turn it away from Him swt until he finishes, or turns to the right and left (saying the ending words *"Assalaamu Alaykum"*). (Narrated by Ahmad, Aboo Daawood and Nasaa'ee)

It has also been narrated in a hadeeth:

"Indeed, the servant, as long as he is in prayer, possesses three qualities: Blessings are showered upon his head from the heavens, the angels sit around him, from his feet to the heavens and a caller says: 'If the servant knows the One Who hears his utterances, he will never leave his prayer.'" (Muhammad ibn Nasr al-Mirwazee in 'Kitaab us-Salaah')

Allaah showers His Mercy upon the performer of the prayer who offers prayer in a state of humbleness and humility towards Allaah سبحانه وتعالى, in fear and calling upon Him seeking His Pleasure and in hope of His Mercy, praying to His Lord, his most important attention, dedicating his whispered talking to Him, and his standing in worship and his bowing and his prostration, attending fully to his heart and his feelings and attempting to perfect his acts of worship, for he knows not whether he will offer another prayer after it, or whether he will be overtaken by death before he can pray again. He stands before his Lord seriously, with deep feelings, hoping that it will be accepted and fearing it might be rejected, for truly, its acceptance is a cause of happiness, while its rejection is a reason of misery and severe pain. Nothing could be more important to you, oh my brother, in this prayer, or in fact in any other of your deeds. What is more worthy of your grief and distress, your fear - indeed your terror - is that you do not know whether your prayer will attain favour



with Allaah سبحانه وتعالى at all, nor whether any one of your good actions will be accepted. Do you know if your sins will be forgiven at all? After all this, you have no guarantee that you will escape from the punishment of the Hell. So who is worthier of your weeping and grief than Allaah that He may accept from you your actions? Additionally to this, you do not know whether or not you will awaken in the morning, nor whether you will still be here in the evening - will you be given the good tidings of Paradise, or the bad news of the Hell-fire? I only want to warn you, oh my brother, of this fearful hazard. It is not good that you should be happy because of your kith and kin, your wealth or your children. It is the most astonishing thing that you should carry on being inattentive, running after vain lusts, wasting your time in neglecting these most important affairs, for you are being driven at a barbaric pace towards death, day and night, hour-by-hour, like the wink of an eye. You should expect, oh my brother, your time - death may come at any moment; do not be careless of this great danger which may meet you. Most surely, you must at last taste death. Your time of death may come in the morning or in the evening. You will be separated from all that you owned - either you will be rewarded with Paradise or punished in the Hell. Narrations and stories of both of these are plenteous. Oh my brother! Did you not hear the words of the pious slave: "I am surprised about the Hell-fire. The one who would run away from it - how does he sleep? And I am surprised concerning the Paradise. The one who desires it - how does he sleep? For, by Allaah swt! If you neither desire Paradise, nor fear the Hell-fire, then you are destroyed and grievous will be your sorrow, ceaseless your grief and without limit your tears; you will be one of the distressed, the punished ones. So if you claim that you are one of those who ask protection from the Fire and desire Paradise, then attempt for that which you seek and do not be misguided by your worldly lusts." Know - may Allaah be merciful which you - that Islaam is in retreat, knowledge is decreasing and disappearing; it has been narrated from the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم that He said:

"Islaam started with only a few believers and it will again be as it was when it started." (Muslim and Tirmidhee)

It has also been narrated that he صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"The best of my nation is the generation to whom I was sent, then those who would come after them, then those who would come after them, then those who would come after them - and the rest would get worse until the Last Day." (similar *hadeeth* in Bukhaaree and Muslim)

It is also related that He صلى الله عليه وسلم said to his Companions:

"You are better than your sons and your sons are better than their sons and your grandchildren are better than their children and the rest will continue to get worse until the Last Day."

He صلى الله عليه وسلم also stated:

"There will come a time when nothing will remain from Islaam except the name, nor of the Qur'aan except its words." (Bayhaquee)

And it is reported that a man said: "How will we be destroyed, when we read the Qur'aan and teach it to our children, and they teach it to their children?" He صلى الله عليه وسلم said:

"May your mother dispossess you! Do not the Jews and the Christians teach their children the *Torah* and the *Injeel*?" Replied the man: "Yes, oh Messenger of Allaah!"

"And what did this benefit them?"

"Nothing, oh Messenger of Allaah!" (Ahmad, Ibn Maajah, Tirmidhee and Daarimee)

The people are so low in the religious matters generally, and in offering of their prayers particularly. They can be classified into three categories, two of which do not perform prayer at all. The first includes: the *Khawaarij* (the misguided sect of extremists who impose their views by force) the *Rawaafid* (the extreme Shее'ites), the *Mushabbihah* (those who says the Attributes of Allaah are similar to those of the creation) and the innovators. They are arrogant of prayer in congregation and they do not pray with the Muslims in the mosques as they brand us as *kuffaar* (disbelievers) and blame us of ignoring the way of Islaam. The second group is the wastrels, those who run after vain desires and lusts, who spend their time in depraved gatherings, drinking alcoholic beverages and doing evil deeds. The third group is the people of the *Jamaa'ah* - the true group of the Muslims who do not abandon congregational prayers when they hear the *Adhaan*. They offer prayer together with the Muslims in their mosques. They are the best of the three groups. Although they are the best, because of their righteousness and virtuousness, they lose their prayers, for they precede the *Imaam* (except he whom Allaah wants) in their *rukoo'* and in their *sujood*, in their rising up and going down, or because they act along with the *Imaam*, when they should follow after him in all of their



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movements and acts. A person who offered prayer in the Holy Mosque of Makkah during the *Hajj* season told us: "I saw a large number of people there preceding the *Imaam*, and they were from all over the world: from *Khuraasaan*, from Africa, from *Armeeniah* and many other countries - as Allaah willed."

And we have observed this ourselves. You see the *Khuraasaanee*, coming all the way from *Khuraasaan* to perform *Hajj* yet preceding the *Imaam* when he prays with him. Similarly you notice the *Shaamee* people (i.e. from Greater Syria), the African, the *Hijaazee* and the others doing likewise. More amazing than this is to see the people competing in virtue, coming early to Friday prayer - perhaps some of them prayed *Fajr* prayer in the congregational mosque, desiring to achieve righteousness, praying: bowing, prostrating, standing, sitting, reciting the Qur'aan, calling upon Allaah in hope and in fear - and they maintain so until 'Asr prayer, after which they invoke until *Maghrib* prayer. But despite all of this, they precede the *Imaam*; and this is a deception of Shaytaan. He controls them and deceives them about the reward of their obligatory prayers. They bow and they prostrate along with the *Imaam*. And they rise up and go down with him, due to lack of knowledge, and the trick of Shaytaan. They try to attain closeness to Allaah by their voluntary prayers, and then they lose the reward of the obligatory prayers. It was narrated:

"Allaah will not accept a voluntary worship until the obligatory worship has been performed."

Only the one who does not lose the fundamental thing may expect to attain the reward of the earlier attendance. One might be deprived of the extra reward and suffice with the reward for the obligatory act, but not the reverse. Whoever misses the reward of the fundamental thing, loses the additional reward too, but whoever loses the extra reward but gets the reward of the fundamental, this will be enough for him. When you lose the obligatory, while attempting for the voluntary, you are like the trader who looks just at his profits without subtracting his capital expenses and so he spends all of the 'profit' and is left without profit and capital. May Allaah shower His Mercy upon the one who observes his brother preceding the *Imaam* in *rukoo'* and *sujood*, or praying poorly by himself and gives advice to him - commanding him to perform the obligation and preventing him from doing the unfair - and does not keep quiet, because giving advice is an obligation, while keeping quiet is a punishable sin. Truly, the Shaytaan desires you to keep away from talking about those things which Allaah has made obligatory upon you and to give up the common cooperation in righteousness and piety and mutual advice-giving which He سبحانه و تعالى has ordained upon you. Shaytaan wishes that you be among the

humiliated wrongdoers, not of those bestowed reward. And he wants the religion to vanish and that you do not protect even a single *sunnah*, nor put out even a single innovation. Therefore, obey Allaah in those issues of which He swt has made obligatory upon you, such as mutual advising and general cooperation in enjoining righteousness and goodness. And do not follow Shaytaan, for truly he is an enemy to you, who will openly mislead you; Allaah سبحانه و تعالى has told you of this in His words:

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوًّا

Verily, Shaytaan is an enemy to you: so treat him as an enemy. (Qur'aan 35:6)

And He also says:

يٰۤاٰدَمُ لَا يَفْتِنَنَّكَ الشَّيْطٰنُ كَمَا اَخْرَجَ اٰبَوَيْكَ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ

O sons of Aadam! Do not let Shaytaan seduce you in the same way as he drove your parents (Aadam and Hawa) out of the Paradise. (Qu7:27)

You should know that this deficiency in prayer from those Muslims to whom righteousness is referred and those who go early to pray, from east to west, is because of the silence of the People of Knowledge and Jurists concerning them and about their wrongdoing; and their ignoring the advising and teaching of good manners; commanding the good and preventing from the evil which are obligatory upon them; additionally rebutting the mistakes and changing that which is incorrect. Because of this, the ignorant carry on preceding the *Imaam* and there are many with them who pretend to be amongst the People of Knowledge and Jurisprudence, vision and righteousness, still they do not pray completely. It in fact is the strangest thing to observe the knowledgeable following the ignorant and acting likewise, preceding the *Imaam*. It is obligatory upon the scholars and the Jurists to teach the ignorant and give them advice and take them by the hand. The failure of doing so will be punished due to the mistake, and it is an act of disobedience and disloyalty with the faith. They are in many ways similar to the deceived, the talebearer and those who are arrogant of the poor and the weak and the other wrongdoers too frequent to mention.

It has been related from the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم that He stated:

"Anyone amongst you who notices something evil, should change it with his own hands, and if he is unable to do so, he should prevent the same with



his tongue; if he is unable to do this, he should at least consider it as bad in his heart; this is the lowest degree of belief." (Bukhaaree, Muslim and Aboo Daawood)

The one who wastes his prayer, whether by anticipating the *Imaam* or by not perfecting his bowing and prostrating if he offers prayer alone, does a disliked action, because he is a thief, as the Holy Prophet ﷺ stated:

"The worst thief is the one who steals from his prayer." They asked: "Oh Messenger of Allaah! How does one steal from his prayer?" He ﷺ replied: "He does not complete his bowing or his prostration." (Ahmad, Maalik and Daarimi)

He who steals from his prayer must be censured by whoever notices him, and he must give him advice. What if a thief were to steal a *dirham* (a coin), would whoever saw him not be obligated to rebuke him? The one who steals from his prayer is a worse thief than the one who steals a *dirham*. It has been narrated from Ibn Mas'ood رضي الله عنه that he stated: "Whoever observes a person praying poorly and does not prevent him participates with him in his sin and his discredit."

It is related from Bilaal ibn Sa'd, that he said: "The hidden sin harms only its doer, but if it is committed openly and not prohibited, it will harm the whole society." It destroys the whole society for they have ignored what is obligatory upon them, which is to censure and to change in public committed sins. So if a person prays poorly where nobody sees him, thus wasting the reward of his prayer due to not completing his *rukoo'* or his *sujood*, the sin is only upon him. But if he commits it where people can take notice of him and nobody censures him nor forbids him, then all of them are sinners. So, oh Slaves of Allaah! Fear Allaah in all of your matters, in particular your prayer, and complete them and advise your brothers to offer it correctly. It is the last thing of your religion, so hold fast to it. Also, your Lord has mentioned it from the deeds of obedience, which He has made obligatory upon you, so complete the commission with which your Prophet has particularly informed you. It is narrated from the Prophet ﷺ that:

"The last advice which he bestowed upon his people before leaving this world was: 'that you fear Allaah in your prayers and regarding that which your right hands are owners of (slaves).'" (Ahmad, Nasaa'ee and Ibn Maajah)

Prayer is the last thing to be lost in Islaam; after it has disappeared nothing will remain of Islaam. It is the first of his actions about which the slave of Allaah will be asked on the Last Day and it is a central pillar of Islaam, and if the pillar falls, the whole tent will fall. The ropes and the pegs will not be enough. If the prayer is lost, the Islaam is lost. Allaah سبحانه وتعالى has particularly mentioned it from the various acts of obedience and has described those who offer it perfectly, as righteous. He سبحانه وتعالى ordered us to call upon Him through it, and to tolerantly do all acts of obedience and refrain from all acts of disobedience. So order those who are careless and warn them - May Allaah be merciful with you - that they should offer the prayer in the mosques and prevent them from defiance, by your hands - if you are not able to do so, then speak out and be aware that it is not permissible for you to be quiet concerning them, because absence from prayer is a major sin. It has been related that the Messenger of Allaah سبحانه وتعالى said:

"I have considered ordering a fire to be kindled and then ask someone to lead the people in prayer. And then go to the men who did not attend the prayer and burn their houses over them." (Bukhaaree and Muslim)

The Holy Prophet ﷺ rebuked them by threatening to burn their houses, and it is clear that if the nonattendance of the prayer were not a major sin, he would not have uttered this. It was also related:

"There is no prayer (there is no reward) for the neighbour of a mosque but in the Mosque." (Daarimee & Haakim)

The neighbour of the mosque means whosoever lives up to a distance of forty houses away from the mosque. He ﷺ said:

"Whoever listens to the *mu'adh-dhin* (caller for the prayer) and does not answer and come to attend the prayer, there is no prayer for him except the one who has a valid excuse."

It is related that when 'Umar bin al-Khattaab was the caliph, he knew that a certain person was missing from the congregational prayers and so he went to his house to inquire why he was absent. He called out the man, he emerged and Umar رضي الله عنه asked him: "What did stop you from attending the prayer?" He answered: "Sickness, oh Leader of the Muslims! If I had not heard your call, I would not have come out," or he answered: "I could not have come out." 'Umar ra said: "You have



ignored the call of the man who has more rightful to be answered than I - Allaah's caller for the prayer."

It has also been reported from 'Umar that he noticed the absence of some people from the prayer and he stated:

"What is wrong with the people who are absent from the prayer, causing others to follow their example? Either they come to the mosque or I will send someone to strike over their necks." And then he said: "Attend the prayer! Attend the prayer!"

Narrated from 'Abdullaah bin Umm Maktoom:

"O Allaah's Messenger! I am an old man while my sight is weak and my body is feeble and my home is very far. Between me and the mosque there are palm trees and narrow valley - is there a permission for me to offer prayer at home?"

The Prophet ﷺ asked him: "Do you hear the *adhaan*?" He answered: "Yes." The Prophet *saw* said: "Then respond to it." (Bukhaaree and Muslim)

The Messenger of Allaah ﷺ did not allow a feeble, old, blind person, who lived far from the mosque and whose path was full of hurdles, such as a narrow valley and palm trees, to be absent from the congregational prayer. If it were allowed for anyone to absent himself from the prayer, the Messenger ﷺ would have allowed this feeble, old, blind person to do so. Therefore you must threaten those who do not come to pray in the mosque, because they do a great sin in not doing so. And you are their associates in this major sin if you do not give them advice and admonish them when you can do so.

It has been related by Aboo Dardaa', from Ibn Mas'ood, that he said: "Truly, Allaah, has legislated a Sunnah for every Prophet. And He ﷻ has legislated for your Prophet; part of that Sunnah is to pray five times a day in congregation. Now I have come to know that every one of you has a 'mosque' in his house. You should not pray there, as you will be abandoning the Sunnah of your Prophet, and if you neglect the Sunnah of your Prophet you will have gone astray."

So fear Allaah, and order the absentees to pray in congregation. If you do not do so you will be blameworthy of sin and will be partner in their sin too and you will not be protected from the Fire. This is due to your abandoning the obligation of

advising and rebuking, and to prevent the detestable deeds with your hands, if you are able, and your tongues, if you are not. It has been explained in a *hadeeth*:

"A man will come forward on the Day of Judgement dragging his neighbour. And he will utter: "O my Lord: This man betrayed me." The other will reply, "O my Lord! By your Power I did not deceive him, neither in his family nor in his wealth." The first will say again: "He has spoken the truth, O my Lord but he used to observe me committing sins and he did not prevent me from doing so." (Al-Mundhir)

The one who is absent from the congregational prayer commits a major sin, so beware of his taking hold of you tomorrow - on the Day of Judgement - and arguing with you in front of the Most Powerful. And do not delay advising him today, even though he may disrespect you or harm you or show hostility to you, for truly, it is better for you that he should be your enemy today than that he should drag you tomorrow on the Last Day and argue against you in front of the Most Powerful and reject your excuses in that incredible place. Tolerate his disgrace today for Allaah's cause and for His pleasure, that you may be among the Prophets and their followers in faith tomorrow - the Last Day. If you notice a man praying a voluntary prayer and he does not straighten his back between *rukoo'* and *sujood*, it is obligatory for you to order him to pray properly, and to prevent him from praying badly and to teach him how to offer prayer. If you are a failure in doing so, you will be partners with him in bearing his sin and you will all lose the reward of your prayer.

You should know that from the mistakes committed by the ignorant is that they pray voluntary prayer and they do not make the *rukoo'* or the *sujood* properly nor straighten their backs, and they think that it does not matter because they are only praying a nonobligatory prayer and that they will be rewarded for it. But that is not the position, because whoever prays a voluntary prayer, it is obligatory for him to pray it perfectly and correctly, just as it is obligatory for a person who wears the garments of *Hajj* (*Ihraam* cloth) to perform *Hajj* perfectly, although it may be a voluntary act. And whoever went hunting while wearing *Ihraam* during his *Hajj* would have to make expiation for it. Similarly, if a man were to fast a voluntary fast and then break it in the afternoon, he would be obliged to make up for that day.\*

\* It is proven with authenticated evidences that a voluntary fast does not have to be made up. The Prophet ﷺ said: "The one who is observing fast voluntarily is in charge of himself. If you wish you can complete the fast and if you wish you can break your fast." (Narrated by Ahmad, Daaraqutnee, Bayhaquee) According to the narrations it is just preferable to fast again for that day.



Likewise, a man who gives a coin as charity to a poor person and then takes it back is obliged to return it to the poor. Every nonobligatory act contains obligatory acts, which must be performed completely and perfectly; and the worshipper makes them obligatory upon himself as soon as he starts the act of worship, whereas if he had not begun that act there would be nothing incumbent upon him. So if you see someone praying an obligatory or voluntary prayer, advise him to offer it correctly and perfectly; if you do not, you will be branded as a sinner (May Allaah save you and us).

Some arrogant and ignorant people say: "There is no obligation or sin upon the one who precedes the *Imaam* due to forgetfulness." For evidence, they quote a *hadeeth*, which says:

"There is no obligation upon those who follow the *Imaam* to perform the *sujood as-sahoo* (prostration of forgetfulness)."

It is true that this was related, but they mistook in understanding its meaning. Its meaning is: Whoever stands when he should sit, or sits when he should stand, or forgets whether he has prayed three or four *rak'aat*, or forgets to make *takbir*, is not obliged to make the *sujood as-sahoo*. This does not apply to one who precedes the *Imaam*. Nothing has come to us on the authority of the Prophet ﷺ or the Companions about this issue, whether the praying person precedes the *Imaam* intentionally or forgetfully. The Prophet ﷺ said:

"Does not one of you fear that if he raises his head before the *Imaam*, Allaah may change his head into that of a donkey?" (Bukhaaree & Muslim)

He did not say: "unless he does it forgetfully." Nor did he oblige him to prostrate the forgetfulness prostration. Ibn Mas'ood said: "You have neither offered prayer alone nor followed your *Imaam*." He did not say: "unless you did it forgetfully." Nor did he oblige him to make the prostration of forgetfulness. And Ibn 'Abbaas also said: "You have neither offered prayer alone nor with the *Imaam*." He did not say: "unless you did it forgetfully." Nor did he oblige him to make *sujood as-sahoo* - instead he struck him and ordered him to pray again. And Salmaan stated: "Whoever raises his head and bows before the *Imaam* - his forelock is in *Shaytaan's hand*." He did not say: "unless he does so forgetfully. Nor did he order him to prostrate the *sujood as-sahoo*."

Sometimes the Prophet ﷺ and Umar رضي الله عنه and other Companions forgot. Some of them would forget to recite in the first two *rak'aat*, reciting instead in the last two. Some sat when they should stand or stand when they should sit and in all these cases, they did *sujood as-sahoo*. This has been narrated in many *ahaadeeth* from the Prophet and his Sahaabah and this is the way of the Prophet ﷺ. And the one who anticipates the *Imaam*, it is narrated that there is no prayer for him - whether due to forgetfulness or not. *Sujood as-sahoo* does not expiate for it. How could it expiate, when he observes the *Imaam* going down himself, and prostrates quickly, going into *sujood* before him? How could it when he observes the *Imaam* still in *sujood* but raises his head before him? How could it when he makes *sujood* when he sees the *Imaam* is going to do so while the *Imaam* is still sitting? Or the *Imaam* finishes reciting, so he bows before the *Imaam* has said 'Allahu-Akbar'? It is an obligation upon him in all these cases to wait for the *Imaam* to act before following him. There is no place for *sujood as-sahoo* in these cases. There is no expiation with the *sujood as-sahoo* for this mistake. Neither the Prophet ﷺ ordered it nor did his Sahaabah. Instead they ordered that the prayer must be prayed again, and the Prophet ﷺ made us fear of the punishment. He ﷺ said:

"Allaah may make his head into that of a donkey."

This is because he did not complete his prayer and is ignorant in it and he lessened the importance of it in his heart. Let the ignorant man beware of considering that he pardons himself with *sujood as-sahoo* that which cannot be excused, thereby bearing the burden of his sins and those whom he guides astray by his false instance - an instance which none of the righteous would follow. So be careful in your prayers - oh slaves of Allaah - because it is the last thing of your Islaam. Let the one who believes that he has prayed when he has not to be wary, for it is narrated:

"That a man prays for sixty years and yet he has no prayer (no reward for the prayer)." It was asked: "How can that be?" He replied: "He completes his *rukoo*' but does not complete his *sujood*, or he completes his *sujood* but does not complete his *rukoo*'."

It has been reported from Hudhayfah that he saw a man praying who did not complete his *rukoo*' or his *sujood* and he said to him:



Likewise, a man who gives a coin as charity to a poor person and then takes it back is obliged to return it to the poor. Every nonobligatory act contains obligatory acts, which must be performed completely and perfectly; and the worshipper makes them obligatory upon himself as soon as he starts the act of worship, whereas if he had not begun that act there would be nothing incumbent upon him. So if you see someone praying an obligatory or voluntary prayer, advise him to offer it correctly and perfectly; if you do not, you will be branded as a sinner (May Allaah save you and us).

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It has been reported from Hudhayfah that he saw a man praying who did not complete his *rukoo*' or his *sujood* and he said to him:



"For how long have you been offering prayer in this way?" He replied: "For forty years." Hudhayfah said: "You have not prayed, and should you die in this state you will have died upon other than the Nature of Islaam." It is also reported concerning Ibn Mas'ood that:

"He was speaking to some of the Companions, when all of a sudden he stopped talking. They asked him: 'What interrupted you from talking, oh Aboo Abdur-Rahmaan?' He said: 'I see the strangest thing! I see two men: The first, Allaah will not look at, and the second, Allaah will not accept his prayer.' They questioned: 'Who are they?' he replied: 'Regarding the first, he is the one who walks with pride. And concerning the second, whose prayer will not be accepted, he is the one who is praying without completing his rukoo' and sujood.'"

It has been narrated in Bukhaaree and Muslim:

"A man entered the mosque and prayed, then sat with the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and he صلى الله عليه وسلم asked him:

"Have you prayed, oh so and so?" He said:

"Yes, oh Allaah's Messenger." He صلى الله عليه وسلم told him:

"Stand up and pray again." Then the man repeated it. Then he sat with the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم again. He صلى الله عليه وسلم asked him:

"Have you prayed, oh so and so?" He said:

"Yes, O Allaah's Messenger."

"You have not prayed, stand up and repeat it." He prayed again, and after three or four times, the Prophet saw taught him to offer prayer perfectly. After that he offered prayer in the way taught to him by the Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم."

May Allaah the Almighty guide us to the right path and lead us to pray properly according to the *Sunnah*!



# In this Book

- Imam Ahmad has put very serious emphasis on the importance of prayer.
- He mentioned Qur'aanic verses, Ahaadith, Statement of Sahaabah and sayings of Taabi'een, in abundant, to authentic his opinion.
- He also seriously took notice of those, who are headless in their prayers.
- It has been discussed in detail how we should prostate, bow and stand up praying behind an Imam or individual.